

**WOMEN OF WOODLAWN, INC. CORPORATE MEETING MINUTES
FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2014**

- 1) **Time and Place.** Women of Woodlawn, Inc. (WOW), held its monthly meeting on November 13, 2014 at 4378 Katonah Avenue, Bronx, NY 10470, at 7:00 P.M.
- 2) **Attendance.** The following officers of the Corporation were present: Erin Lee (President), Kim Holocher-Furletti (Vice President), Sharon Douglas (Secretary), Iraida Gonzalez (Treasurer)
Absent: Gayle Snible (Chief Communications Officer)

Other members present: Gerry Kelpin, Nnenna Franciamore, Sylvia Mahoney, Michelle Connolly, April McFarlane, Linda Whetzel, Ramonita Castro, Carrie Parker

The following guests were also present by invitation: Rosie Ortiz, Maria Arias-Clarke, Chris McKenna, Angelines M. Alba-Lamb, Susan McSherry, Kris Hart, and **Mr. Jason Laidley (Representative from the New York City Comptroller, Scott Stringer's office)**

- 3) **Presiding Officers and Quorum.** President, Erin Lee, called the meeting to order and acted as Chair thereof, and Sharon Douglas acted as secretary of the meeting. The Chair announced that a quorum of the officers was present, and that the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed with its business.
- 4) **Approval of Minutes.** The secretary presented to the Corporation, the minutes of the monthly corporate meeting of the Women of Woodlawn, Inc., held on October 9, 2014. Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously approved, the following resolution was adopted:

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the monthly corporate meeting of Women of Woodlawn, INC., held on October 9, 2014, be and they hereby are, adopted and approved.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

A) Corporate Bank Account: Treasurer, Iraida Gonzalez, reported that the Corporation has a total of \$240.00; money that has been collected as membership dues. In order to provide a depository for the funds of the Corporation and to authorize certain officers to deal with the corporate funds, an account was opened at Country Bank on October 18, 2014. It is now therefore, possible to accept cash as well as checks from members who wish to pay their yearly dues by this method.

The following resolutions were adopted upon motion duly made, seconded and carried: RESOLVED, that all funds of the Corporation be deposited with Country Bank; that the Treasurer, President or Vice President of the Corporation shall be authorized to endorse checks, drafts, or other evidences of indebtedness made payable to the order of the Corporation, but only for the purpose of deposits; and RESOLVED, that all checks, drafts, and other instruments obligating the Corporation to pay money shall be signed on behalf of the Corporation by any of the following officers:

SIGNER 1: Iraida Gonzalez

SIGNER 2: Erin Lee or Kim Holocher Furletti

B) **Expenses of Incorporation.** In order to provide for the payment of the expenses of incorporation and organization of the Corporation, on motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the following resolution was adopted:

RESOLVED, that the President or the Treasurer of the Corporation be, and they hereby are, authorized and directed to pay the expenses of the incorporation and organization of the Corporation.

C) **Fund Raising:** Iraida suggested that as a fund raising venture, the Corporation should purchase a vendor's table at the annual St. Marks Christmas Boutique, which will be held on Friday, December 5, 2014. At this fair, craft items will be sold as a means of raising money. Plans will be made to procure items from "crafty" members who wish to donate. WOW member, Ramonita Castro, stated that her sister who is a crafter, would be willing to supply craft items for sale.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously approved, the following resolution was adopted: RESOLVED, that the Treasurer's report be accepted and approved as presented.

6. **COMMUNICATION OFFICER'S REPORTS**

A) **WOW's Website:** Kim Holocher-Furletti, Vice President, reported that the Women of Woodlawn's website continues to be a work in progress. She has great plans to increase the site's content as well as she invited suggestions from her fellow WOW members. Kim plans to establish various photo galleries that will display photographs of various events that WOW participates in; including civic activities performed within the community and media appearances, among others.

Another plan is to establish a cooperate sponsors' page that will feature a list of the local businesses that have supported WOW's initiatives thus far. There is also plans to enlist the support of new businesses. The purpose of the sponsors' page is to show WOW's appreciation as well as to encourage community patronage at large. Local businesses that are present

supporters of Women of Woodlawn include, **The Emerald Isle Immigration Center, Rosewater Media, Rambling House, and Wholeshare.**

Kim also intends to add a “Guide to Woodlawn,” page, which will serve the purpose of providing information about the community of Woodlawn Heights. This will include information on local restaurants, biking/hiking trails, places of worship, and activities for children, among other points of interest. Kim believes that it would be useful information for local visitors and tourists alike; as well as prospective home buyers who need to familiarize themselves with the community’s resources.

B) Daily News Featured Article: On Sunday, November 2, 2014, Women of Woodlawn was featured in the Daily News in an article titled, “New Civic Group in the Bronx Gives Women the Chance to Speak up About Issues in Overlooked Neighborhood.” The article was the product of an interview conducted by columnist, Denis Slattery, of the Daily News. This interview sheds light on the basis for the group’s formation; as well as the quality of life issues that are of concern within the community of Woodlawn Heights. The publication of this article has attracted the attention of important players in the political arena; including the New York City’s Comptroller, Scott Stringer’s office. Mr. Jason Laidley, a representative from the Comptroller’s office, has since contacted Women of Woodlawn to enquire how the Comptroller’s office may be of assistance to our cause. Mr. Laidley has also made a commitment to attend the Corporation’s monthly meetings.

Other opportunities for media exposure that are in the pipeline, includes an interview that is slated to be done on December 1, 2014 on “BronxTalk, and a pending interview with News12 (date undetermined).

Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously approved, the following resolution was adopted: RESOLVED, that the Communication Officer’s report be accepted and approved as presented.

7) OLD BUSINESS

A) Public School 19 Overcrowding (Vice President/Communications Assistant, Kim Holocher-Furletti)

In its ongoing effort in advocating for the New York City Department of Education to address the gross overcrowding of Woodlawn’s only public school, Women of Woodlawn had sought the support of various individuals within the department of education as well as the political sphere. Individuals contacted included; Carmen Farina (New York City’s School Chancellor), Ms. Elizabeth White (Superintendent of Bronx School District 11), Ms. Pamela Johnson (President of Community Education Council 11), NYC Councilman, Andrew Cohen, Father Richard Gorman (Chairman of Bronx Community Board 12), and Senator Jeffery Klein.

On October 15, 2014, the New York City Department of Education/School Construction Authority's architects and engineers visited P.S. 19, and met with Principal Sullivan to discuss viable options to address the school's overcrowding issue.

It was reported that this visit came about in response to a discussion that Councilman Cohen had with NYC Mayor, Bill de Blasio after a meeting that Women of Woodlawn arranged with the councilman and major community stakeholders on September 15, 2014, including CEC 11 President Pamela Johnson; Community Board 12 Chairman Father Richard Gorman; Principal Sullivan of PS 19; Co President Nimia Rose of PS. 19's PTA ; Webster Avenue Taxpayers Association President Jeremy Skehan; Senator Klein's office representative Ciara Gannon; and John McGrath and Kathleen Corrigan representatives from the Woodlawn Taxpayers Association.

In order to expand the existing school without closing it, School Construction Authority and Principal Sullivan discussed the following ideas:

- erect a new building along the 237 Street side of the property
- build a new library and science lab
- erect a multipurpose room that would function as this gymnasium for two classes at a time as well as, music/art room, auditorium space and cafeteria
- attach the new building to the existing building by elevators
- reroute entrance to the school to 237th Street
- retrofit 1st floor of old building as classrooms
- introduce Pre-Kindergarten grades as well as add an additional classroom per grade

It is estimated that the proposed work would take place over a period of about 6 years.

B) UPK Program / 236th Street Development (President, Erin Lee)

Erin reported that, in WOW's relentless effort to secure Woodlawn Height's share of New York City's free Universal Prekindergarten seats, she reached out to Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC), a community based organization that is a major provider of early childhood education within the Bronx Community. She discussed the absence of the program in Woodlawn and inquired whether MMCC would be interested in establishing the UPK program in Woodlawn.

Ms. Agnes Vendiola, director of the organization's child development program, met with executive officers of WOW at the 236th street site for a preliminary observation on November 12, 2014. Ms. Vendiola recognized great potential in this site and planned further discussion with senior executives of MMCC. Subsequently, MMCC requested a meeting with Women of Woodlawn, their executive directors, and the owner/developer of the 236th Street site, Mr. Ray Kahn. Date of the meeting to be determined.

8) NEW BUSINESS

- A) **Establishing Committees:** Erin expressed the idea that the formation of committees would allow for more programs to be addressed and more projects to be executed effectively. She suggested the formation of smaller committees or sub-groups and that each member should decide on which committee she would like to serve on. Committees include:

Marketing: This group will be working to promote WOW's presence in the Woodlawn neighborhood; as well as encouraging other neighborhood women to join Women of Woodlawn. Members would also be working to establish partnership with businesses in and around the community of Woodlawn, for advertising purposes. Activities may include but not limited to, flyer distribution and speaking directly with business owners regarding advertising opportunities.

Grant Writing- This group will be researching grant opportunities that are aligned to particular WOW projects. The group will also be helping to write proposals and other forms of grant applications, in order to secure funds that are much needed to execute planned projects. Members will be researching various programs for additional funding, and working with community partners to execute larger projects.

Fundraising- This group will be engaged in brainstorming, planning, and executing fundraising ideas and events, in order to support WOW's mission and community effort.

Beautification- This group will engage in planning and executing projects for the purpose of neighborhood beautification; including the beautification and revitalization of our commercial area; neighborhood and parks clean-up projects, trash collection, and various home gardening projects to assist elderly members of the community.

Business/Merchant Support: Work on fostering a strong relationship with our local businesses and assist in the needs and concerns related to our commercial areas including brainstorming on how to boost our downtown, attract new businesses, address vacant storefronts and serve all commercial needs/concerns.

- B) **Love Your Block Grant Application:** Women of Woodlawn has submitted an application for the "Love Your Block Grant," which provides funds to civic groups that are interested in revitalizing a block within their neighborhood. Special thanks goes to Angelines Alba-Lamb, who took time out on short notice, to complete the application on the Corporation's behalf. Thanks is also extended to Kim, Iraida, Mary Grimes, and Erin who assisted.

C) **Neighborhood Issues/Concerns:**

i) **Vacant Storefronts:**

Members voiced concern for the growing number of storefronts that are vacant

along our Katonah Avenue shopping district. This is attributed to ever increasing rent by the building's landlord. WOW plans to offer businesses free ads on our website to add content as well as to support our local businesses

i) Planned Closing of the Public Library:

Linda Whetzel, a member of the library's support group as well as a Women of Woodlawn member, expressed concern that because of budgetary constraints, the New York Public Library does not have plans to find temporary accommodation for the library when the planned renovation is taking place. Linda has asked fellow Women of Woodlawn members, to join the Woodlawn Library Support Group in order to help advocate for funds. Plan was made for another WOW representative to join Linda at the next Woodlawn Library Support Meeting on Saturday, November 16, 2014 at 9:00 am.

Members expressed the fact that the library serves as an important meeting place for many elderly residents as well as a source for educational research for the students of P.S 19; a school that does not have a library. There are plans to address the issue of the library closing at the school's next PTA meeting.

WOW members expressed the idea that the City Council should be approached with the idea of possibly allocating money from the Discretionary Funding or some other resource, to pay for the rental of a suitable storefront that would function as temporary library facility. Another idea expressed was the creation of a petition; calling for the City of New York to fund the cost of renting a storefront to house a make-shift library.

D) Volunteer Opportunities:

- i) Friends of Van Cortlandt Clean-up:** On Saturday, November 16, 2014, Friends of Van Cortlandt Park will be weeding out invasive plants and planting bulbs near the dog park, children's playground, and along the John Muir trail. Volunteers are needed for this project.
- ii) Meals on Wheels Program:** Our partner, Emerald Isle Immigration Center is looking for volunteers for its "Meals on Wheels Program." Volunteers are needed to deliver meal bags to elderly residents private homes or apartments. There are three (3) shifts and deliveries are made Monday through Friday, between 11:00 am and 1:00 pm. Volunteers do not need to own a car or have a driver's license. The program has a van that transports volunteers to the various locations.

9) Adjournment. There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

Sharon Douglas (Secretary of the Meeting)